

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAM-01 DPW-01 /089 W

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R 011609Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2623

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 5366

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SS, SP, MO, AL, MA

SUBJ: RELEASE OF MOROCCAN PRISONERS

REF : MADRID 5253

1. CHIEF OF HIGH GENERAL STAFF, LT.GEN.VALLESPIN, TOLD ME AUGUST 1 THAT SPANISH GOVERNMENT, INDEED, HAD INFORMED MOROCCANS (REFTTEL) THAT 16 MOROCCAN PRISONERS WOULD BE RELEASED. HOWEVER, WITH THE INCIDENT LAST SUNDAY NIGHT WHERE MOROCCAN FORCES HAD ENDEAVORED TO TAKE SPANISH PRISONERS, SPANISH GOVERNMENT HAD AT LAST MOMENT DECIDED NOT TO GO THROUGH WITH THE RETURN. VALLESPIN COMMENTED THAT EVEN THOUGH THERE HAD BEEN ANOTHER INCIDENT EARLY A.M. JULY 30, SITUATION SINCE THEN HAD BEEN QUIET,AND HE BELIEVED THAT IF SITUATION REMAINED THAT WAY OVER THE NEXT RELATIVELY FEW DAYS, GOS WOULD THEN PROCEED TO TURN OVER THE PRISONERS TO MOROCCO.

2. VALLESPIN COMMENTED THAT THE SAHARA PROBLEM NOW SEEMS TO HAVE TURNED INTO A DIPUTE BETWEEN MOROCCO AND ALGERIA IN WHICH SPAIN IS CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE.HE ALSO EXPRESSED THE
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VIEW THAT THE SAHARAN PEOPLE HAD NO DESIRE TO BE INCORPOR-

ATED INTO MOROCCO, BUT RATHER WISHED INDEPENDENCE. HE PERSONALLY DID NOT BELIEVE INDEPENDENCE WAS THE ANSWER FOR THIS TERRITORY WITH ITS SMALL POPULATION AND TOTAL LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE. HOWEVER, HE RECOGNIZED THAT IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THIS MIGHT BE THE ONLY WAY OUT. HE LAMENTED THAT SPAIN HAD NOT TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION SEVERAL YEARS AGO TO REACH A BILATERAL UNDERSTANDING WITH MOROCCO. NOW IT WAS TOO LATE.

3. VALLESPIN SAID THAT HE WOULD SPEND NEXT WEEK VISITING THE CANARY ISLANDS AND SAHARA. (VALLESPIN'S VISIT IS ONE OF A SERIES OF VISITS BY MILITARY MINISTERS AND OTHER HIGH-RANKING MILITARY OFFICERS TO INSPECT SPANISH FORCES AND TO TAKE A READING OF THE LOCAL SITUATION.)

4. COMMENT: WHILE SPANISH MILITARY ARE NOT PARTICULARLY HAPPY WITH GOS POLICY ON THE SAHARA, THEY FULLY ACCEPT GOS DECISION TO LEAVE THE SAHARA AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. THEY FULLY RECOGNIZE DANGERS IN BECOMING INVOLVED IN ANY SUSTAINED ACTION WITH MOROCCANS, AND THEIR PRESENT AIM IS TO KEEP EVERYTHING IN AS LOW KEY AS POSSIBLE UNTIL THE MOMENT COMES TO EVACUATE.
STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE, POLITICAL SITUATION, SELFDETERMINATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975MADRID05366
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750267-0387
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750891/aaaadccl.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 MADRID 5253
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 MAY 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <02 OCT 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RELEASE OF MOROCCAN PRISONERS
TAGS: PFOR, SS, SP, MO, AL, MA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006